

The Success Story Of Farouk Shami

President Biden is ready to sign an executive order to let tens of thousands more refugees come into America.

Under former President Trump there was a cap of 15,000 refugees in fiscal year of 2021. The number of refugees admitted into the U.S. fell dramatically under the Trump administration.

During the campaign Biden committed to

open more doors to newcomers and allow 125,000 to come into the country. That is ten times more than the previous administration.

We are so glad President Biden is helping more refugees come here to seek the American dream.

We as the new immigrant community will open our arms to welcome them be-

cause most of the people are looking to America as their last hope.

Almost fifteen years ago the founder of Chi, my friend Mr. Farouk Shami, was running for Governor of Texas. His famous remark was, "In Texas, without Latino Mexicans, it would look like our sky without sunshine."

Farouk is an immigrant from Palestine. His success story represents how much contribution newcomers make to our nation.

Farouk we are so proud of you. Today all of us should be able to tell the new administration that it is vital for our coun-

try to have new blood to build this nation.

Many years later we will have more Farouks in this country to help America become a better place to live.



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Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Orders Agencies To Use Defense Production Act

Biden Releases National COVID Strategy To Fight Pandemic



Workers at a Chrysler plant assembling tanks during World War II under the Defense Production Act of 1950. (Photo/Bettmann Archive/Getty Images.)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

President Biden released his national strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic last Thursday, which will include using the Defense Production Act (DPA) and other powers to speed up the manufacturing of testing and vaccine supplies and other items needed to fight COVID-19. The Trump administration had resisted calls to release a comprehensive plan to fight COVID-19, instead deferring significant authority to the states. The plan released by the Biden administration Thursday aims to instill confidence in the U.S. pandemic response by accelerating the vaccine rollout, boosting testing and access to treatments and protecting those at most risk, including communities of color.

"For almost a year now, Americans could not look to the federal government for any strategy, let alone a comprehensive approach to respond to COVID," said Jeff Zients, Biden's COVID-19 response coordinator.

"This is a plan that is driven by science data and public health. It's not driven by politics."

Invoking the DPA is a key part of the Biden administration's national strategy for defeating the coronavirus, though officials did not say when it would be used. Biden administration officials signaled they would be more aggressive than the previous administration in invoking the DPA, which allows the federal government to force companies to increase production of critical sup-

plies during national emergencies.

"Where we can produce more, we will. Where we need to use the Defense Production Act to help more be made, we'll do that too," said Tim Manning, Biden's COVID-19 supply coordinator, in a call with reporters Wednesday.

Manning said his team has identified 12 immediate supply shortfalls, including for N95 masks, isolation gowns, gloves and swabs needed for tests. The administration will also use the DPA to accelerate production of syringes, raw materials used in vaccines and other items needed to quickly get shots in arms, officials said.

"The team will work with the states and the manufacturers to ensure that we're using the DPA as aggressively as needed to accelerate the supply of the vaccine," said Bechara Choucair, Biden's COVID-19 vaccine coordinator.



In-demand PPE includes nitrile gloves.

"President Trump has not used his DPA authority sufficiently enough to award adequate medical supply contracts for the nation's needs. We must immediately do more to re-shore the most in-demand PPE, such as nitrile gloves, nearly all of which are manufactured in China," a group of Democratic senators wrote in a letter this week to Biden, urging him to invoke the DPA.

According to the plan, Biden's strategy is centered around seven goals: restoring trust with the American people; mounting a safe and effective vaccination campaign; expanding masking, testing, data and treatments; building the health care workforce; safely reopening schools, businesses and travel while protecting workers; protecting those most at risk for serious illness, including people of color; and restoring U.S. leadership globally. The strategy aligns with several of the executive orders Biden will be signing Thursday, including one that will require mask-wearing in airports and on trains, airplanes and other modes of interstate travel.

The plan also lays out goals to establish an "effective, comprehensive" and "aggressive" vaccination campaign but did not offer timetables for when shots will be available to the general public.

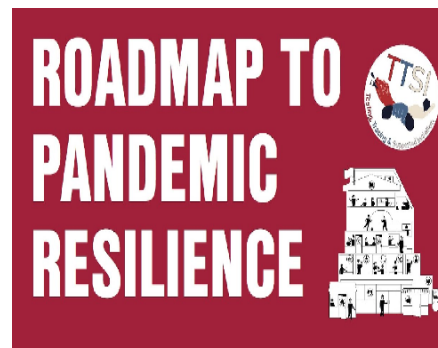
In addition to using the DPA to ramp up vaccine supply, the plan also calls for releasing most doses to states as they become available, encouraging states to quickly open up eligibility for who can get shots, creating more venues where people can get vaccinated, with a focus on hard-to-reach and high-risk populations, and recruiting more people to serve as vaccinators, the plan reads.

"We must do this equitably. We cannot miss vaccinating communities that are hit hardest by the pandemic. This is going to have to be critical to our success," Choucair told reporters. The administration had already set a goal of getting 100 million people vaccinated within the first 100 days of Biden's first term.

"More people, more places, more supply. That's what this boils down to," Choucair said.

Biden will also sign executive orders Thursday increasing federal reimbursement to states and tribes from 75 percent to 100 percent of the cost for National Guard personnel and emergency supplies, like personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitizing efforts and opening

mass vaccination centers.



Another executive order will create a Pandemic Testing Board, which will aim to increase testing capacity, expand the public health workforce, support COVID-19 screening in schools and ensure access to tests in underserved communities, according to the White House.

Biden will also sign an executive order directing studies to identify COVID-19 treatments and ensure those studies address the needs of diverse populations. Other orders intend to improve the collection of COVID-19 data, direct federal agencies to provide guidance on school reopenings and to establish worker safety guidelines.

Biden will sign another executive order creating a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, which will provide recommendations to the president for allocating resources and funding in communities that are disproportionately impacted by the virus. Biden officials stressed the administration will need more funding from Congress for the plan to work. Biden has proposed a \$1.9 billion stimulus package, which would also go toward boosting the U.S. response.

"While we will urgently execute the strategy, we do need Congress to act, and act quickly," Zients said. (Courtesy thehill.com)

Related

Biden Says Latest Executive Order Will Rebuild 'Backbone Of America'

President Biden on Monday signed an executive order meant to increase federal procurement of U.S.-made goods, describing it as a step toward rebuilding the "backbone of America" and bolstering the middle class.

"Today, we are getting to work to rebuild the backbone of America — manufacturing, unions, the middle class. It is based on the simple premise that we'll reward work and not wealth in this country," Biden said in remarks at the White House. "The key plank of the future will be made in America."

The order is designed to strengthen the rules surrounding the Buy American Act requiring federal agencies to purchase American-made products, according to administration officials. It will create a new senior role at the White House Office of Management and Budget to oversee the

implementation of the administration's "Made in America" initiative aimed at cutting back on unnecessary waivers granted to agencies to buy foreign-made products. It will also direct officials to create a website where waivers can be viewed publicly to help other businesses compete.



"This is a critical piece of building our economy back better and including everyone in a deal this time, especially small businesses that are badly hurting in this economy," Biden said.

Former President Trump signed a similar order months after he took office that aimed to tighten rules for visas given to skilled foreign workers and directed the government to fully enforce "Buy American" laws. Monday's executive order, Biden said, would "tighten the existing 'Buy American' policies and go further." Biden characterized the order as a step in the broader economic plan he laid out during his campaign to boost U.S. industries and help end reliance on foreign-made goods at a time when American companies are badly hurting due to the coronavirus pandemic. Biden said his long-term plan would involve the federal government investing in American-made goods to rebuild U.S. infrastructure and purchasing clean electric cars in order to spur job creation. The president also noted that the pandemic exposed weaknesses in U.S. supply chains and emphasized the need for the country to produce its own protective equipment and essential supplies.

"The reason we need to do this is America can't sit on the sidelines in the race for the future," Biden said. "To ensure the future is made of America, we need to win not just the jobs of today but the jobs and industries of tomorrow. We know that the middle class built this country, and we also know that unions build the middle class. So let's invest in them once again."

(Courtesy thehill.com)

Editor's Choice



A devotee sits at the bank of Hanumante River as he offers prayers during the first day of the month-long Swasthani Brata Katha festival in Bhaktapur, Nepal. REUTERS/Navesh Chitrakar



Safeway pharmacy manager Kel Fanny administers a COVID-19 vaccine to Linda Horst at a mass vaccination site at the Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds in Ridgefield, Washington. “It’s a relief,” said Horst. REUTERS/Alisha Jucevic



President Joe Biden rests his hands on the Resolute Desk before signing multiple executive orders. A portrait of former President Andrew Jackson, who espoused a populist political style that has sometimes been compared with that of Trump, is...MORE



A patient is carried to the COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Cascais Hospital in Cascais, Portugal. REUTERS/Pedro Nunes



People sled down a public sledding trail on Mount Uetliberg in Zurich, Switzerland. REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann



People wait next to empty oxygen tanks to be recharged at a private supplier amid the coronavirus outbreak in Lima, Peru. REUTERS/Sebastian Castaneda



A picture of President Joe Biden greeting Pope Francis joins family photos. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

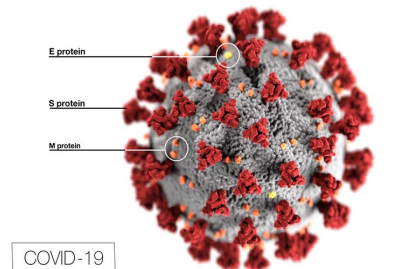


Army soldiers stand guard as demonstrators set fire near a Lebanese politician’s house, during a protest against the lockdown and worsening economic conditions in Tripoli, Lebanon. REUTERS/Omar Ibrahim

A Coronavirus Vaccine That Wouldn’t Require A Shot



A vaccine that is simple as putting on a Band-Aid is in development. (Photo UPMC)



dissolvable microneedle array. This is like a Band-Aid, but with hundreds of small needles, roughly the width of a human hair and just over half a millimeter in length. In this case, the microneedles are made out of a sugar-like substance mixed with the antigen. When the vaccine patch is stuck on the skin, the microneedles poke into the skin and dissolve, releasing the antigen without causing pain or bleeding. This delivers the vaccine to a region of the skin that has specialized “scout” cells known as dendritic cells that recognize foreign invaders, and carry that information to the body’s immune system factories where antibodies are made.

Potential to scale quickly

When we tested this microneedle coronavirus vaccine in mice, we saw that it helped trigger the production of many antibodies which can then respond to the target protein on the virus. Our team of Pitt and UPMC scientists hope to be able to test this vaccine in people very soon. Our next step is to obtain approval from the Food and Drug Administration to start these clinical trials. The entire clinical testing process can take a year to 18 months in normal times. But there is nothing about this pandemic that is “normal.” Very intelligent and hard-working scientists at the FDA are doing their best to assure that a vaccine which is both safe and effective will be available as soon as possible. Safety is everyone’s primary concern.

The advantage of our microneedle delivery system is that it is relatively straight forward to make and uses very little antigen. That means that production can be scaled up very quickly. In addition, unlike most vaccines that need to be kept cold from when they are made until they

are given to the patient, this vaccine does not require this “cold chain” and can be distributed and stored at room temperature like Band-Aids. Cutting out this cold chain – a goal researchers have been pursuing for years – reduces cost and should facilitate global vaccine distribution. Of course, we never know how well a vaccine will work until it’s tested in patients, but progress with this vaccine and others like it give us a reason for hope. (Courtesy theconversation.com)

Related

Vaccines Will Power 5.5% Global Economic Growth In 2021: IMF

WASHINGTON (AP) — The spread of COVID-19 vaccines will power a stronger global economic recovery in 2021, the International Monetary Fund forecast Tuesday.

After sinking 3.5% in 2020, the worst year since World War II, the global economy will grow 5.5% this year, the 190-country lending organization predicted. The new figure for 2021 is an upgrade from the 5.2% expansion the IMF forecast in October and would mark the fastest year of global growth since the 2010 snapback from the financial crisis.

The vaccines should contain the spread of the virus and allow governments around the world to ease lockdowns and encourage a return to normal economic activity. The world economy also got a boost from government stimulus programs late last year in the United States and Japan.



But the IMF also says economies worldwide will need support from their governments to offset the damage from the pandemic and warns that coronavirus mutations could cloud the outlook for global health and economic growth. “Much depends on the outcome of this

race between a mutating virus and vaccines and the ability of policies to provide effective support until the pandemic ends,” IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said at a press briefing Tuesday. “There remains tremendous uncertainty.” In an update to its World Economic Outlook, the IMF said that it expects the U.S. economy -- the world’s biggest -- to expand 5.1% this year after collapsing 3.4% in 2020. No. 2 China is expected to record 8.1% growth after eking out a 2.3% increase in 2020.



Women carry shopping bags, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020, in New York. The spread of COVID-19 vaccines will power a stronger global economic recovery in 2021, the International Monetary Fund forecast Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021. (Photo/M. Lennihan/AP)

The 19 countries European countries that share the euro currency will collectively register 4.2% growth this year after seeing economic output crater 7.2% in 2020, the IMF says. The Japanese economy is forecast to grow 3.1%, reversing a 5.1% decline in 2020.

The IMF gave India a big upgrade, thanks to a faster-than-expected recovery at its factories and farms: The Indian economy is forecast to expand 11.5% in 2021, fastest among major economies, and a turnaround from 2020’s decline of 8%. The agency also expects global trade to rebound this year: recording 8.1% growth after falling 9.6% last year. (Courtesy us-news.com via AP)



光怪陆离：陆外山海物物语

提到妖魔鬼怪，现代人的头脑中可能会想到中国民间传说中的狐精，或是日本文化中的河童，或者欧洲文化中的吸血鬼。

中国地域广大，历史悠久，浩瀚的时空中诞生的神怪传说本就有如恒河沙数，如星辰散落全国各地，难以一一尽数。而台湾，作为中国的一个岛屿，长期辟处山海一隅，如果要让你说出几个台湾文化中的妖魔鬼怪，你能说出多少呢？即使是在台湾岛内，能够较为完整说出本土妖魔鬼怪故事的台湾人，想必也不会太多。台湾学者胡万川就曾感叹：如今在校的台湾大中小学生，对台湾的民间故事已较少或不再听闻。

有鉴于此，小说家何敬尧一头扎进了浩如烟海的“妖怪学”文献之中，系统分类，摘录台湾古往今来的文献记载，将妖魔鬼怪与乡野奇谈之故事呈现于世人们面前，编成了这本《陆外山海物物语：三百年岛屿奇幻志》。

好奇志怪：从志怪传统到妖怪手册

中国很早就有“志怪”的传统，所谓“志怪”，就是记载那些神异鬼怪之事。

“中国本信巫，秦汉以来，神仙之说盛行，汉末又大畅巫风，而鬼道愈炽；会小乘佛教亦入中土，渐见流传。凡此皆张皇鬼神，称道灵异，故自晋迄隋，特多鬼神志怪之书。其书有出于文人者，有出于教徒者。文人之作，虽非如释道二家，意在自神其教，然亦非有意为小说，盖当时以为幽明虽殊途，而人鬼乃皆实有，故其叙述异事，与记载人间常事，自视固无诚妄之别矣。”

鲁迅在《中国小说史略》中的短短数言，言简意赅地指出了志怪在六朝时期兴盛的原因。从《山海经》到《聊斋志异》，志怪之学在不同历史时期都大放异彩，相关著作层出不穷，成为中华文化典籍的重要组成部分。如果没有这些志怪之书，我们的神话传说将会黯然失色，我们的信仰世界将变得空洞无物，我们的文学创作也将变得单调乏味。

台湾作为中国的一部分，其妖怪传说，自然也上承中国的志怪传统。《陆外山海物物语》一书盘点了台湾本土的妖怪传说。如果仔细阅读，就会发现，台湾的妖怪传说，有许多正是中国大陆特别是闽粤地区民间传说的复制或变形。譬如书中提到明代普陀山僧人释华佑游历台湾岛，就在苏澳、鹿港海岸目睹陆地上的鹿进入水中变成海水中的鲨鱼，成为“鲨鹿儿”，而鲨鱼的顶部还留存着鹿角。

这一怪谈，其实就来自于中国古代的“化生说”，《礼记·月令》中的“腐草为萤”即是“化生说”最早的例证之一。至于鹿变鲨鱼的传说，最早则见于晚唐文人刘恂《岭表录异》中记载的一种名为“鹿子鱼”的怪鱼。根据刘恂的说法，这种鹿子鱼出自罗州，亦即今天的广东廉州，“每春夏，此鱼跃出洲，化而为鹿”。刘恂还煞有介事地说有位渔人真的捡到一条正在变化中的鹿子鱼：“头已化鹿，尾犹是鱼。南人云：‘鹿化为鱼，肉腥不堪食’。”

流传于唐代广东的民间传说，就以这种方式被移植到台湾本土的妖怪故事。而书中提到的妖牛传说，

同样来自于中国古代的志怪文献。据说妖牛能说话，还能预知未来。1862年，台湾中部的四张犁（今台中北屯）有妖牛说话，预言将来无田可种，颗粒无收。此后果然在当地发生了戴万生之乱，中部百姓仓皇逃命，许多田地因此荒废。

这个传说的原型，则可以追溯到东晋志怪笔记《搜神记》中的一条“牛能言”的记录。晋惠帝太安二年，江夏郡功曹张聘骑的牛突然开口说话道：“天下方乱，吾甚极矣，乘我何之？”这年秋天，果然发生了张昌之乱，江夏沦为主战场，“郡破残，死伤过半”。除了替换一下儿时间、地名和人名之外，台湾所谓妖牛传说几乎可以说是《搜神记》在1500年后的翻版。

因此，我们应该注意到这些产自台湾本土的妖怪故事，尽管千奇百怪，但其基本类型却不超出传统志怪故事的范畴。也可以说，台湾的妖怪故事虽然流传于岛内，却与大陆乃至整个世界的妖怪故事有着相同的故事类型。

《山海经》里记载远古“雕题国”居民文身如同鱼鳞，司马迁《史记》记载秦始皇陵里的油灯用人鱼膏制作而成，万年不灭。无独有偶，在台湾澎湖列岛，流传着荒古之前有“蛟龙族”栖居的传说，道光年间还有渔夫在淡水厅苗栗堡捕获了一条人面鱼。而西方历史上最著名的人鱼故事，莫过于能够以歌声蛊惑水手的塞壬海妖的古希腊神话。人鱼传说，在世界各地都广泛流传，台湾也不例外。在妖鬼神的世界里，世界各地的人们仿佛不约而同地实现了“神话大同”。

妖是妖，怪是怪：妖怪的“分类法”

将“妖”和“怪”区分开来，是本书的创获之一。“妖”指称的是“妖鬼神游”，“怪”则是“奇谈怪梦”。前者可以分为三种类型：妖怪、鬼魅、神灵。

那么，“妖怪”、“鬼魅”、“神灵”之间有什么关系呢？

在何敬尧看来，这三者其实有着共同的起源和演变轨迹。所有的妖怪传说，都来自天地自然、动植物、无机物和人类。这也是世界上所有妖魔鬼怪故事的共同起源。妖魔鬼怪无论多么玄幻神奇、恐怖惊悚，

都是以现实中的生物作为原型的。人的想像力终究有限，我们不可能超出物质世界之外去无限地地想象。即使是在科技高度发达的今天，也是如此。

在台湾原住民的观念中，天地万物皆有灵，因而天地自然之间都有妖怪和神灵存在。其中一部分演变为传说故事，另一部分则被遗忘。这是台湾“妖怪”的来源之一。来源之二则是漂洋过海来台定居的大陆居民。他们面对陌生的岛内万事万物，充满了未知的恐惧，因而也流传出许多妖魔鬼怪的故事。

台湾岛自古以农业为经济来源。荷兰人占据台湾后，为了开垦西部平原，还引进了黄牛作为垦地之用。郑成功收复台湾后，还从大陆引入水牛用于农耕。牛在台湾农业社会中占有重要地位。考古发掘更证实，野牛、犀牛等大型哺乳动物曾在岛内生存。由是之故，有关“牛”的妖怪故事也在岛内广为流传。除了“鲨鹿儿”，释华佑还记载了他和朋友捕捉并骑行身形庞大如象的“巨象牛”的故事。因耕牛在台湾社会地位之重要，当地人还建有“牛将军庙”，专门祭祀水牛。有关牛的“妖怪”故事的演变，或许可视作岛内妖怪故事演变的一个缩影。

因此，台湾早期“妖怪”的故事，多与幻兽妖怪相关，显示出它们的“原始性”。但到了19世纪末20世纪初，“妖怪”的故事越来越少，“鬼魅”的故事却越来越盛行。“鬼魅”故事的出现，与汉人的灵魂观念与祭祀文化密不可分。“鬼魅”之缘起，始自人。人死之后，灵魂化为幽鬼，存在于人世之间，得到人类崇拜。“鬼魅”在台湾还和原住民的“祖灵文化”相结合，与汉人的幽鬼文化共同构成台湾本土“鬼魅”的来源。在“鬼魅”之中，修行较高、功德较大者，就能获得天人庇佑，为人敬畏，配享寺庙，成为尊神——“神灵”。

尽管作者对岛内的“妖怪”故事做了细致的类型划分，但在时人的观念中，却未必将这些妖魔鬼怪划分得如此细致而明晰。

我们今日对物神的划分，深受林奈“双名法”的影响，讲究系统性、条理性 and 唯一性，并以此作为建立自然界秩序的依据。但时人的认识并非如此。比如，作者将雷公鸟归入“灵禽”一类，属于“妖怪”，但实际上它的作用与雷神相似，具有“神灵”的特点。这倒并不是说前人的头



《陆外山海物物语：三百年岛屿奇幻志》

作者：何敬尧

版本：中国工人出版社 2020年5月

脑不清楚，导致分类杂乱无章，而是当我们试图用今日的法则去对前人记载的种种事物进行分类时，已经犯下了“以今例古”的毛病。尽管这些妖怪故事的内容荒诞不经，但它们作为一种古老的故事和信仰在岛内流传，一直保持着旺盛的生命力。“妖怪学”知识背后的观念与心理，体现着时人对世界的理解方式、对人生实践的态度以及对诸种情感的体验。

“妖怪”：今日的创作灵感

在“他者”与自我的文化想象中，台湾“妖怪学”展现出的不仅仅是那些令人好奇乃至恐惧的故事，更是时人宇宙观、自然观与人生观的集中表达。从这个意义上讲，“妖怪学”的“非科学性”，也许才真正展现出了当时人的知识、信仰与思想世界的真实面貌。

古老的传说，也可以化作今天的灵感。“妖怪学”的故事对于当下台湾的文化创作也有着极大的助益。台湾电影《红衣小女孩》以1998年轰动台湾的“红衣小女孩”事件为素材，并依据台湾本土传说，将红衣小女孩塑造为一个出没于荒野、能够迷惑人心的魔神仔。而影片中代表正义的一方，则是源自台湾民间信仰的守护神——“虎爷”。不久前在大陆和台湾爆红的电视剧《想见你》，虽然没有直接体现“妖怪”的元素，却也融爱情、奇幻、悬疑于一炉，在充分展现台湾本土的文化与风情的同时，也透过文化心理上的根脉相通，连接起大陆和台湾两岸观众在情感价值上的彼此理解——这正是台湾妖怪学研究的意义：奇幻的想象，根植的是同一片中国文化的沃土。